In The Life -by Essex Hemphill

Mother, do you know
I roam along at night?
I wear colognes,
tight pants, and
chains of gold,
as I search
for men willing
to come back
to candlelight.

I'm not scared of these men
though some are killers
of sons like me. I learned
there is no tender mercy
for men of color,
for sons who love men
like me.

Do not feel shame for how I live.
I chose this tribe
of warriors and outlaws
Do not feel you failed
some test of motherhood.
My life has borne fruit
no woman could have given me
anyway.

If one of these thick-lipped,
wet, black nights
while I am out walking,
I find freedom in this village.
If I can take it with my tribe
I'll bring you here.
And you will never notice
the absense of rice
and bridesmaids.